

provider report



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Member Experience Survey Captures Feedback to Improve Patient Care and Satisfaction

Appropriate patient care is essential to the overall health of the ones you serve. New Hampshire Healthy Families is dedicated to partnering with you to help maximize opportunities to improve patient care and patient satisfaction, for the benefit of you, the physician and the patient.

Each year, New Hampshire Healthy Families conducts a member experience survey utilizing a standardized national tool titled CAHPS® (Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems)*. Patients rate their overall health, their physician care and the experience they have within your practice. New Hampshire Healthy Families has created a web page at www.NHHealthyFamilies.com under Q1 Program outlining the category of questions your patients respond to, provider discussion questions and provider tips to enhance the relationship with the patients you serve.

**CAHPS is a registered trademark of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.*

The Intersection of Asthma and Heart Disease

We've long known that heart disease may be accompanied by diabetes or depression. Researchers continue to explore a link between asthma and heart disease. Two recent studies, presented at the American Heart Association's annual meeting in 2014, suggest an association—though they do not prove a causal relationship.

One of the studies showed that individuals with active asthma had about a 70 percent higher risk of heart attack than those without asthma—even when controlling for risk factors like obesity, hypertension, smoking, diabetes and high cholesterol.

Another study found that those who take daily medications for their asthma have a 60 percent greater chance of heart attacks and strokes versus individuals without asthma. The question remains whether there is a causal relationship between asthma and heart disease

or whether the association is the result of the same factors influencing both conditions.

The short-term takeaway, however, may be the need for increased awareness and education among asthma patients. Asthma patients may dismiss chest pain or discomfort as an asthma symptom and fail to get adequate treatment in time. It's also important for physicians to help asthma patients manage their modifiable cardiovascular risk factors, researchers note.

HEDIS measures take into account patients with asthma between the ages 5 to 64 who receive medication for long-term control of asthma. Two rates are measured—the percentage of patients who stay on their asthma controller medication for at least 50 percent of the treatment period and the percentage who remain on their controller medication for at least 75 percent of the treatment period.

» **Are You on Our Email List?** Visit our website www.NHHealthyFamilies.com and sign up for our email mailing list. It's the fastest way to stay informed about New Hampshire Healthy Families news, events and provider updates. Or call provider services at 1-866-769-3085.

Member Rights and Responsibilities

How to Refer to Case Management

Medical case management is a collaborative process that coordinates and evaluates options and services to meet an individual's health needs and promote quality and cost-effective outcomes.

New Hampshire Healthy Families case management is intended for high-risk, complex or catastrophic conditions—including transplant candidates and members with special health care needs/chronic conditions such as asthma, diabetes, sickle cell disease, HIV/AIDS and congestive heart failure.

Case managers can help identify and mitigate barriers to care and work with members to understand why it's important to follow the treatment plan outlined by their physician. They are a resource for the healthcare team, the member and the member's family.

Our case management team is here to support your members who are non-adherent to your treatment plans, have social barriers and complex multiple comorbidities. Providers can directly refer members to our case management program at any time. Call **1-866-769-3085** to get information about the case management services offered or to initiate a referral. Learn more about our case management services at www.NHHealthyFamilies.com.

The New Hampshire Healthy Family member rights and responsibilities policy addresses its members' treatment, privacy and access to information. We have highlighted a few below. There are many more and we encourage you to consult your provider manual to review them.

Find the complete provider manual online at www.NHHealthyFamilies.com or get a printed copy by calling **1-866-769-3085**.

Member rights include:

- ▶ To be treated with respect and with due consideration for his/her dignity and privacy.
- ▶ To participate in decisions regarding his/her health care, including the right to refuse treatment.
- ▶ To receive complete information about his/her specific condition and treatment options, regardless of cost or benefit coverage.

Member responsibilities include:

- ▶ To provide, to the extent possible, information needed by providers for care.
- ▶ To make his/her primary care provider the first point of contact when needing medical care.
- ▶ To follow appointment scheduling processes.
- ▶ To follow instructions and guidelines given by providers.

Disease Management Can Help Your Patients

As part of our medical management and quality improvement efforts, we offer members disease management programs.

Disease management programs aim to:

- ▶ Promote coordination among the medical, social, and educational communities.
- ▶ Ensure that referrals are made to the proper providers.
- ▶ Encourage family participation.
- ▶ Provide education regarding a member's condition to encourage adherence and understanding.

- ▶ Support the member's and caregiver's ability to self-manage chronic conditions.
- ▶ Identify modes of delivering coordinated care services, including home visits.

These programs are intended for patients with conditions such as asthma, diabetes and high-risk pregnancies. Learn more about these services by visiting www.NHHealthyFamilies.com or by calling **1-866-769-3085**.

MEASURING PERFORMANCE

The Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS) is a set of performance measures updated annually by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA).

HEDIS is used by most health plans to measure performance on important aspects of care and service. HEDIS is designed to provide purchasers and consumers with information to compare healthcare plans. Final HEDIS rates are typically reported to NCQA and state agencies once a year.

Through HEDIS, NCQA holds New Hampshire Healthy Families accountable for the timeliness and quality of healthcare services (including acute, preventive, mental health and others) delivered to its diverse membership. New Hampshire Healthy Families also reviews HEDIS data for ways to improve rates. It's an important part of our commitment to providing access to high quality and appropriate care to our members.

You can help us improve our quality

ratings. Familiarize yourself with the HEDIS topics covered in this issue of the provider newsletter. Also, review our clinical practice guidelines at www.NHHealthyFamilies.com.

We want to work with you. If you have any questions about coverage, claims, credentialing or contracting, or if one of our members would like a paper copy of anything found on our site, call us at **1-866-769-3085** or visit www.NHHealthyFamilies.com.

The Unexpected Reach of Depression

Depression is a serious medical condition—one that can accompany other chronic diseases or present independently.

Many people with depression do not get the care they need. In fact, it's estimated that only about two-thirds of those with depression seek treatment. Additionally, it can take years to get a diagnosis and begin treatment after the onset of depression. That's why it's important for primary care physicians to be on the lookout for signs and symptoms of depression and to educate patients when possible.

Some research indicates that nearly 10 percent of primary care patients have major depressive disorder. However, patients may be reluctant to use the word "depressed" and may deny having depression when asked.

Plus, symptoms of an illness being treated may overlap with the symptoms of depression, making it harder to identify mental illness. Look out for the following signs and symptoms of depression:

- ▶ Unexplained weight loss and fatigue
- ▶ Feeling sad, empty, or hopeless most days
- ▶ Reduced concentration
- ▶ Loss of interest in activities that were once enjoyable
- ▶ Headaches
- ▶ Gastrointestinal problems
- ▶ Heart palpitations

Practitioners may also notice signs of changing mental health—for instance, a patient who stops caring for his physical appearance or a patient who complains of sleep troubles. If you do identify depression in a patient, let them know that help is available. Medications with therapy can be helpful.

Whether you treat depression in your office or choose to refer patients, set patients up for success with realistic expectations: Let them know that relief is likely, but that it won't be instant, and be sure to prepare them for the potential side effects of treatment.

▶ **FOLLOW-UP IS KEY:** New Hampshire Healthy Families can help your patients schedule appropriate after-care to improve the follow-up rates for members who have been hospitalized for a behavioral health condition.

A patient who has been hospitalized for a mental illness should be seen within 7 days of discharge.

Please contact New Hampshire Healthy Families if you have a patient who has been recently hospitalized for a behavioral health condition and who is having difficulty arranging a post-discharge appointment. We will work with your staff to make these arrangements.



Encouraging Regular Prenatal Care

Women who do not get prenatal care are three times more likely to have low birth-weight babies and five times more likely to lose the baby. Still, in a recent study, about 20 percent of women who gave birth didn't receive care until the second trimester, and 6 percent didn't receive prenatal care until the third trimester, or at all.

Here are a few ways you can help make a difference for your patients.

- ▶ **Talk to women before they become pregnant.** For some women, there is a health literacy gap. And if she's only seeing you once a year, you can miss an opportunity to provide education about prenatal care if you wait until she becomes pregnant. Let women know that after a positive home pregnancy test, they should schedule a prenatal exam with an OB/GYN to confirm the pregnancy and begin prenatal care. This is also a good time to talk about prenatal vitamins and folic acid with women who hope to conceive.
- ▶ **Make it easy.** Make scheduling prenatal visits simple for pregnant patients. For example, encourage them to make their next appointment before they leave your office. Provide them with information at each visit, so they know what to expect. For

example, give women easy-to-understand instructions for blood work or tests and for registering for parenting, prenatal, and breastfeeding classes.

▶ **Hand out a prenatal care schedule.**

Share a prenatal care schedule (see sample below) with newly pregnant women so they understand that prenatal care starts immediately and continues throughout their pregnancy.

When you confirm a member's pregnancy, it's important to submit the necessary Notification of Pregnancy (NOP) form to New Hampshire Healthy Families. Doing so helps us best use our resources to help you and your patients achieve a healthy pregnancy. Visit www.NHHealthyFamilies.com for the NOP form.

SAMPLE PRENATAL SCHEDULE:*

- ▶ Weeks 4 through 28 – Once a month
- ▶ Weeks 28 through 36 – Every two weeks
- ▶ Week 36 through birth – Once a week

**Note: Women who are older than 35 or have what is considered a high-risk pregnancy may need to see their doctor more often. This is a sample schedule and not a recommendation for care or proof of coverage.*

Caring for ADOLESCENTS

For parents, watching their children grow can cause mixed emotions. Growing into adulthood is a time of great transition—including changes in health care needs. New Hampshire Healthy Families supports members of all ages getting the care they need.

Parents and providers should discuss whether growing children are seeing the right doctor. Children who are seeing pediatricians may need to switch to an adult doctor. Talk with parents about this transition. You can help ensure that there are no breaks in a child's care.

New Hampshire Healthy Families is required to provide information about how it can help members who are reaching adulthood choose an adult primary care practitioner.

It's important for children to see their doctor at least once a year. Members who need help finding the right doctor or making appointments can call our Member Services staff at **1-866-769-3085**.

ADHD Diagnoses on the Rise

Ninety percent of all Ritalin takers used to be in the U.S. But that's changing, as worldwide diagnoses of ADHD are on the rise. A paper questioning the reasons for this change recently received attention.

Sociologists Peter Conrad and Meredith Bergey published a paper in *Social Science and Medicine*, examining the growth of ADHD in the U.K., Germany, France, Italy, and Brazil.

They suggest there are five non-medical reasons why ADHD diagnoses and Ritalin prescriptions are increasing:

1. Determined lobbying by pharmaceutical companies to allow direct marketing of medications.
2. The great popularity of medication than counseling or other non-medical treatments.
3. Increased usage of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM)—and acceptance of its broader ADHD standards—in Europe and South America.

4. ADHD advocacy groups raising awareness of pharmaceutical treatments.
5. Online research that leads consumers to checklists or articles from drug companies, suggesting they ask their doctors about medication.

Bergey and Conrad note that these reasons do not have anything to do with medicine, warning doctors and consumers to be careful to distinguish between what is “part of the human condition” (e.g., we all fidget or are restless sometimes) and what is actually a disease.

The HEDIS measure for follow-up care states that children ages 6 to 12 who are receiving a new ADHD medication should have a follow-up visit to the prescribing doctor within 30 days of starting the drug. Then, after the initial follow-up visit, the child should have two subsequent follow-up visits during the next nine months.

Four Pharmacy Facts

- 1 New Hampshire Healthy Families is committed to providing high-quality, appropriate and cost-effective drug therapy to its members.
- 2 We work with providers like you, as well as pharmacists, to ensure that drugs used to treat a variety of conditions and diseases are covered. Some medications require prior authorization or have limitations on age, dosage and maximum quantities.
- 3 New Hampshire Healthy Families' Preferred Drug List (PDL) is the list of covered drugs, also known as the formulary. The PDL applies to drugs members can get at retail pharmacies. The PDL is evaluated regularly by our Pharmacy and Therapeutics (P&T) Committee to encourage the appropriate and cost-effective use of medications. The P&T Committee is made up of the New Hampshire Healthy Families medical director, pharmacy director, as well as several physicians, pharmacists and healthcare professionals. See the most up-to-date formulary—including information about prior authorization, step therapy, quantity limits and exclusions—at www.NHHealthyFamilies.com.
- 4 If you disagree with a decision about coverage of a medication, you may inquire about the appeal process by calling **1-866-769-3085**. Please be sure to include all relevant clinical information with the prior authorization request so as not to delay processing.

ARE YOU AVAILABLE?

“Availability” is defined as the extent to which New Hampshire Healthy Families contracts with the appropriate type and number of practitioners necessary to meet the needs of its members within defined geographic areas. The availability of our network practitioners is essential to member care and treatment outcomes.

New Hampshire Healthy Families evaluates its performance in meeting these standards and appreciates providers working with us. Summary information is reported to the Quality Improvement Committee for review and recommendation and is incorporated into our annual assessment of quality improvement activities. The Quality Improvement Committee reviews the information for opportunities for improvement and provides recommendations.

TYPE OF APPOINTMENT	SCHEDULING TIME FRAME
Transitional care after inpatient stay (medical or behavioral)—PCP, specialist or CMHC	Within 7 calendar days of discharge
Transitional care after inpatient stay (medical or behavioral)—home care	Within 2 calendar days of discharge—must be ordered by PCP, specialty care provider or as part of discharge plan
PCP non-symptomatic office visit	Within 30 calendar days of request
PCP non-urgent, symptomatic visits	Within 10 calendar days of request
PCP or other provider urgent, symptomatic office visits	Within 48 hours
Mental health providers	Care within 6 hours for a non-life threatening emergency; care within 48 hours for urgent care; appointment within 10 business days for a routine office visit
Post discharge from New Hampshire Hospitals	Contact with community mental health center within 48 hours of psychiatric discharge from a New Hampshire hospital and follow-up appointment to occur within 7 calendar days
Private hospital psychiatric discharge	Follow-up appointment within 7 calendar days
Emergency providers (medical and behavioral)	Immediately (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) and without prior authorization



PROVIDER SERVICES: 1-866-769-3085, Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. www.NHHealthyFamilies.com

GET IT ON PAPER: If you would like a paper copy of anything in this newsletter or our site, please call **1-866-769-3085**.

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